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EDITORIAL COMMENT

THE NURSE'S PRIVILEGE

Our country is at war. Nurses are needed. In every home from the Atlantic to the Pacific, among the rich and the poor, the old and the young, the effects of this war are being felt. From the homes of every class, regardless of circumstances, a million and a half men have been called to arms, taking from some the means of support and leaving in all a sense of loss and anxiety. This is the burden those who are left behind must carry because of this war. But we should not add to that burden an apprehension lest there be not enough nurses to give to their men, should they be sick or wounded, the proper nursing care.

In every home throughout our land the increased cost of living is being felt. In addition to this every man or woman who earns more than a thousand dollars a year is called upon to pay a special war tax. For those individuals whose earning power is less than that, the increase in the cost of the necessities of life is working a still greater hardship. And all are asked to make sacrifices that we may help feed the armies engaged in the war, those of the Allies as well as our own.

Whenever great numbers of people are crowded together sickness follows. And the bringing together hurriedly of so many thousands of troops to be trained and hardened for service, has brought the usual trail of sickness into our camps. History is again repeating itself, but never before have nations been in a position where they could meet these conditions so effectively.

Throughout the country, men and women of our so-called leisure class are doing hard work in their homes and at Red Cross centers to meet the demands of the Red Cross and the Government, in equipping and maintaining the army. But the Surgeon General holds that none but the most highly trained nurses shall care for the sick and wounded. Our privilege is to serve. Already thousands of nurses are in the service, both in the warring countries and at home. The

nursing service of the Red Cross was practically the only department ready for war when war was declared. We have reason to be immensely proud of ourselves and of our representatives who are officially guiding this department of our Government. But we must do more.

Notwithstanding the splendid showing of Red Cross enrollments, the supreme moment has arrived when the resources of the entire nation must be utilized. The trained nurses of America have at their command now a power which is ready for immediate use. One in close touch with the army in France says, "Every Red Cross nurse who gives her services saves the lives of five hundred soldiers." That is the proportion of men to a nurse, who will die for want of care if deprived of her assistance, for the doctors cannot do all. Think what a tremendous responsibility rests upon us; let us rise nobly to our high privilege.

The first call for war service, among both men and women, takes always the idealists and the enthusiasts—in this war our college men and our most representative nurses. But no war has ever been maintained by recruits from these alone. To keep the ranks filled the plain, practical, everyday worker has always to be urged and brought into line for service, sometimes by special legislation as in the case of our military draft.

We understand that any class of workers needed by the Government to carry on the war may be drawn into service by a similar draft, and that such a draft might, in case of need, be applied to nurses. This, however, is not going to be necessary. Up to the present time we have met the need. And we shall be able to meet it.

There are, undoubtedly, thousands of graduates who have not yet been aroused to a sense of their privilege, but who intend to respond when the need becomes more pressing. They must be aroused to the fact that we need them now, that the men in our home camps suffering from meningitis, scarlet fever and other diseases may not be deprived of the skilled nursing care which we alone can give.

We have in reserve hundreds of women signed for service with the base hospitals who stand ready at an hour's call to serve their country either at home or abroad. And we have over ten thousand nurses which the still incomplete survey shows will graduate in the spring of 1918. Fifty per cent of these nurses can be spared and will enroll for Red Cross service.

To be a Red Cross nurse means that a nurse has submitted to the highest physical, intellectual and moral tests that this country requires of its nurses. The Red Cross nursing pin is, therefore, the emblem of a high degree of nursing efficiency.

The Red Cross Nursing Service makes the reserve for both the Army and the Navy, and the nurse who is enrolled for active service passes automatically into one branch or the other. When the nurse enlists for such service, unlike either medical officers or enlisted men, she does not have to go through a period of training, she is prepared. Florence Nightingale organized the first nurse training school on a military basis as a result of her war experience, and the value of that military training has never been more strikingly proven than in the present crisis.

If every nurse who for some unavoidable reason cannot volunteer, will see to it that one woman who has not yet responded is aroused to a proper sense of duty, she will be performing a patriotic duty second only to actively serving at the front.

To go may mean to look possible death in the face, to stand firm and steady, but that is what every soldier in the trenches is doing today. Can the nurse do less?

There are many things in this life worse than death, and one of these is to have failed when one might have helped. The Bible says that God guards with peculiar care those who are His. Then let us go forth under His banner, as well as under the banner of France, of Britain, and of America, and leave the results with Him.

WHAT TO DO

Nurses engaged in the important work of carrying on our hospitals and training schools should do their bit by enrolling for Red Cross recruiting service among their own pupils and graduates, making application through the nearest Red Cross Nursing Service Committee. We believe that, should our nursing service fail in this great emergency, it would be the fault of our teachers who have not stimulated in their pupils the proper professional spirit.

We suggest that every meeting of nurses to be held during March and April, for whatever purpose, should be turned into a Red Cross rally, with speakers and papers and letters from members now in the service for the purpose of arousing and stimulating a patriotic sense of obligation.

Where nurses do not feel equal to arranging such a programme, they can get assistance from the chairman of their Red Cross Division, and from the Red Cross Notes by Miss Noyes, in the February JOURNAL. The reports that are published in the Red Cross Department of this magazine are official, and are to be obtained only through our columns. This information can be used as material for papers and discussions.

We must not depend entirely upon visits from the Staff of the

National Department of Nursing to awaken patriotic fervor, but in each home center nurses must do their bit in recruiting as well as serving.

Alumnae associations can do much to help to make the life of the nurses in our camps more pleasant by getting together books of a kind that nurses read for recreation, remembering that these women are at isolated points where, even if they could afford to buy books and magazines, these cannot be obtained. One of the nurses writes, "It is a walk of a mile from the nurses' quarters to the ward where I am serving." Some of these camps for 50,000 men cover an area of ten square miles, and means of transportation, such as street cars and free automobiles, are not at hand. There must necessarily be many hours when a nurse is off duty when the lack of good reading matter is greatly felt.

It has been rumored that when the necessary part of the equipment for the nurses' quarters has been provided in the camps, greater consideration can be given to the comfort of our nurses, and that plans will be made for places where they may recuperate without expense to themselves. And we have reason to believe that a bill is now before Congress asking for an increase in their salary.

There are hundreds of nurses who must stand by the home work, especially those in executive positions in hospitals, training schools and the public health field, because the training of the nurses who are to enter war service in the immediate future must be thoroughly and carefully done by these women of experience. In many instances, important work along these lines can be done by women too old for war service, or by married members who may be called back to their hospitals for this purpose. And this same group of workers may be depended upon to stand by in the private nursing field when the lines begin to thin.

Nurses who are going into war service should see to it that they enroll through legitimate and recognized channels. They should enter directly into the Army or Navy, or through the Red Cross into the Army or Navy, not through some unit gotten up on the outside, which may leave them stranded in a foreign country and without protection.

Every nurse young enough and strong enough for war service should get into line *now* that she may respond to her country's call.

VASSAR'S PREPARATORY NURSING COURSE

Vassar College is announcing a preparatory course in nursing for college graduates only. It will be remembered that already many of the leading training schools of the country have opened their doors to college women for a course of two years and three months. Vassar

has in mind a patriotic contribution to national preparedness, in fitting a group of highly educated women to enter directly upon their practical training in nurse training schools, thereby relieving the hospitals of the burden of this preparatory instruction, and saving for these women the summer months which otherwise would be lost to the service.

Beginning the middle of June, 1918, the Dean of the summer course will be Professor Mills, a member of the Vassar College Faculty who, it will be remembered, resigned from the Poughkeepsie School Board some years ago because an untrained woman was appointed as school nurse. She has the right ideals.

This course has been arranged under the general supervision of the Committee of Nursing of the Council of National Defense, but with the direct assistance of Elizabeth Burgess, Inspector of Nurse Training Schools, New York State; Anne H. Strong, Assistant Professor of Public Health Nursing, Simmons College, Boston; and Isabel M. Stewart, Assistant Professor of the Nursing and Health Department, Teachers College, New York.

This course will be financed by the American Red Cross, from money given especially for this purpose. The Vassar Alumnae have undertaken the work of recruiting for the course. The publicity campaign, which will extend over the whole country, is in charge of a committee which includes such well known women as Mrs. Hadley, wife of President Hadley of Yale, Dr. Katherine B. Davis, and Miss Ada Thurston.

The schedule requires from six to eight hours of study, daily, and includes courses in anatomy and physiology, chemistry, bacteriology, hygiene and sanitation, nutrition and cookery, elementary materia medica, elementary nursing, hospital economy, and the historical and social aspects of nursing. For those who may have covered some of these courses satisfactorily in their previous college work, elective courses in psychology, social economy and possibly physiological chemistry will be offered.

An excellent reference library will be at hand as well as every facility for the most advanced laboratory work and class demonstration. Special lectures on interesting phases of nursing and social work will also be included.

Vassar College has arranged with a number of hospitals to admit these pupils at the end of this summer session, and all the students have pledged themselves to go directly into hospital service on the completion of the course.

In those states where the law for state registration requires three years' training in a hospital, some special adjustment will have to be

made. Wisconsin already has such an amendment before the Legislature.

Nurses have been waiting for years for women's colleges to give recognition to nursing needs and standards. Vassar is now leading in the introduction of what we believe will become a generally accepted course in all such colleges. We can see that this is only one of the advantages which the war, despite all its sorrows and sacrifices, is going to bring to the nursing profession.

A DEFINITE WAR TASK FOR MARRIED AND RETIRED NURSES

From the far east and the distant west come reports of a new movement covering practically the same ground, that of mobilizing the married and retired members of the profession for home service in case of emergency or for various kinds of nursing work should war conditions seriously deplete the supply of nurses for regular duty.

In New York, the work has been organized under the direction of Miss Goodrich. It was started as part of the work of the nursing section of Mayor Mitchel's Committee, but with the change of administration in the city government the committee ceased to exist. The plan here, which could easily be carried out in other large cities, is for a central committee with a chairman, associated with whom are sub-chairmen representing the different nurse alumnae associations in New York and Brooklyn. Each sub-chairman is in charge of a group of twelve nurses who are enrolled to give definite service of some kind in case of immediate need. Their names are on file with the most accessible nurses' registry which will notify them on call of the sub-chairman, and the hospitals in which these women have been trained are opening their doors to them for brush-up work in clinics, social service work, operating rooms and various departments.

In Seattle, a nurse who is married and in her own home is teaching seven classes a week in two training schools. She has submitted a plan to her own alumnae association in Chicago (that of Augustana Hospital), for a similar organization to that in New York. Some of the ways she suggests for nurses to be of use, and these apply to all cities and towns, are: Relief of tired nurses on special duty; relief for hours or half days of pupils, general duty nurses, registrars, etc.; assisting superintendents of nurses with clerical work, filing, mailing, etc.; assisting in operating rooms by cleaning instruments, utensils or making dressings during busy days or emergencies; helping a distracted doctor who cannot obtain a nurse, by offering to give the patient a daily bath, alcohol rub or any other treatment prescribed until a nurse may be had, in fact do limited hourly nursing; giving the regular daily or weekly instruction to nurses in training schools,

thus relieving the superintendent and her diminished force of assistants of these exacting duties; conducting Red Cross classes of home nursing for groups of women, thus making possible better home care for those unable to secure the service of a nurse.

MISS GOODRICH CALLED TO SERVICE

"Sometimes things occur as they should." Annie W. Goodrich, president of the American Nurses' Association and assistant professor in the Department of Nursing and Health, Teachers College, has received an appointment under the War Department as Chief Inspecting Nurse of the Army hospitals at home and abroad. She reported for duty at the office of the War Department on February 18. Miss Goodrich is peculiarly fitted to fill this position because of her varied experience in hospitals and as inspector of training schools in New York State, and the profession may feel proud that the Government has made so wise a selection. Miss Goodrich takes with her as her assistant, Elizabeth C. Burgess, now Inspector of Training Schools of New York State. Both have been granted an indefinite leave of absence. It is rumored that Jane E. Hitchcock, who has been from the beginning secretary of the Board of Nurse Examiners, will take under her supervision the work of Miss Burgess' office in Albany and that the inspections will be for a time discontinued.

A CALL FOR CLOTHING

Our readers who are specially interested in the work of the War Relief Committee of *Le Cercle Rochambeau* are asked to contribute garments, worn or new, to be sent through the American Fund for French Wounded direct to France. Underclothing and shoes for children, and warm garments of any kind for destitute men and women are especially needed. They should be sent to Mrs. John R. MacArthur, 346 West 84 Street, New York, or she may be appealed to for further information.

VIRGINIA SETS A GOOD EXAMPLE

The Virginia State Board of Nurse Examiners has recently made decided advancement along two lines. It has appointed an inspector of training schools and it has voted to place a copy of the *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING* and of the *Public Health Nurse Quarterly* in every high school and college library in the state, about one hundred in all. Julia A. Mellichamp, who has been appointed inspector, has been for a long time secretary of the Board of Nurse Examiners and very active in state work. Her familiarity with the nursing problems of the state would seem to make her appointment a very wise one.

REORGANIZATION CHANGES

According to the new by-laws of the American Nurses' Association which become effective at the close of the coming May meetings, conventions will be held biennially, the next one falling in 1920.

It has been suggested that in the alternate years divisional meetings might be held, following the subdivisions of the country made familiar by the Red Cross. For instance, the Atlantic Division includes New York, Connecticut and New Jersey; the Central Division includes Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Nebraska and Michigan.

Delegates are asked to consider this suggestion and to come to Cleveland in May prepared to discuss it fully, as the divisional groups should begin early to plan for their meetings. The advantage of such meetings would be the bringing into closer touch of a great number of women who do not ordinarily attend the national convention.

There is a question in the minds of some state and local officials as to when the change from the old order to the new begins.

State changes may be made as rapidly as conditions in the state make possible.

National changes and all relations of state and local to the national go into effect *at the close* of the convention in Cleveland, which is to be held from May 7th through May 11th, next.

Affiliated organizations are asked to send delegates and to pay dues on the former basis for this convention, with the exception that dues are paid for eight months only, May 1 through December 31 of this year. This makes the dues on the new plan begin with the beginning of the new fiscal year, January 1, 1919, payable in December, 1918, by the state associations.

At the January meeting of the directors of the American Nurses' Association, the chairman of the Committee on Revision, Miss Sly, reported that thirty-nine of the forty-six affiliated state associations are ready for the new plan or will be by the time of the convention. This is, we think, a remarkable achievement. With the closer affiliation which the divisional meetings will make, and with the wonderful personal acquaintance between widely scattered nurses which war service is bringing about, our nursing affairs will be given a tremendous impetus.

OUR ADVERTISING POLICY

In the hope that we may carry our JOURNAL through the war situation without having to increase the subscription price, we are departing from our arbitrary policy of seventeen years and are allowing a small portion of our front cover page to be used for advertising.